

Therefore, I have found it practical not to question my wife concerning minor matters such as the application of words, etc.

"I have put you down for a few lots in the Wolfskill subdivision which is on sale to-morrow," said the Colonel very much relieved.

"I am truly grateful to you, sir. Bless me if there is anything I can do—I will read you—"

"Come to think of it," Storke hastened to interrupt him, "there is something very practical you can do for me. I have here a bottle of water from Eureka springs (producing it from his inside pocket) which I should like to have analyzed with a short report signed by yourself."

"I shall be only too glad!" exclaimed Sykes delightedly, pocketing the phial as they rose from the table.

"That is the beginning of the end," murmured Col. Storke to himself as they parted. "It is risky. Very risky. Ah,—if he ever finds out and turns that caustic pen of his against us we are gone—gone—sky high!" and he walked down street, whistling softly as he went.

"A few days later, after supper, Prof. Sykes was occupied reading the evening paper while his wife sat near the fire knitting, when he suddenly exclaimed:

"Bless me! Here is a singular coincidence, my dear, a professor of the same name as myself, first name and all, succeeded to my chair at the University."

"That is not possible, Chris," answered Mrs. Sykes laying down her knitting.

"Yes, it is so. The paper says: The mysterious influence which has agitated the money market proves to be no less a personage than Prof. Christopher Sykes, a man of fabulous wealth, late professor of ancient history at Oberlin." The article further states that the eminent professor has purchased the controlling interest in the Eureka Land & Water Co. and has ordered a sale of the townsite of Eureka. He was induced to invest because of the remarkable purity of the water of Eureka springs, an analysis of which will soon be published. Just think of it, dear, he bought on the strength of the analysis I made the other day. I am glad for Col. Storke. I must hunt this man up and see if he is any relation of ours."

"Let me see that paper, Chris," demanded Mrs. Sykes, and after assuring herself concerning the article she looked severely at her husband and said:

"Prof. Christopher Sykes you are deceiving me. This article refers to you. Oh Chris, how could you take such a step without consulting me?" and the good lady buried her face in her handkerchief.

"Bless my soul! Bless me! Deceive my wife? Impossible. I, Christopher Sykes, philosopher, speculating in water shares—dabbling in business? Preposterous! Am I a man of fabulous wealth?—Taking steps without consulting her? Terrible. Terrible." The poor man paced the room in his agitation mechanically whipping out his note-book and pencil: "Case in point—let me see—case in point. None. None. Of course not! Couldn't be." Then a startled look came into his eyes as he continued: "The woman is crazy—gone insane. It was in my family four generations back. I must be considerate—very considerate," and stroking her hair he said very tenderly: "Calm yourself, my dear—please calm yourself, dearest."

"Mrs. Sykes had never seen her husband so agitated. She immediately set his fears at rest concerning her sanity with a laugh and a kiss, and, as she gave him caress after caress, with misty eyes, at the thought of the constancy of his love in spite of all her scoldings, it intuitively came to her mind that, perhaps, some great good fortune was coming to them and that she must calm him into forgetfulness of the incident for fear he might spoil it all."

"I must confess," said Thompson. "I was appalled at the very audacity of Col. Storke. I expected to have an enraged scribe on my hands in the morning and felt that the 'jig was up.' But when Sykes came to his work as unconcerned as usual I could not be entirely unprepared for a call from Mrs. Sykes later. I took her into my private office and braced myself for the coming storm."

"What do you mean by using my husband's good name, without permission, to brace up the racally schemes of Col. Storke and yourself. You know that if I choose to open my husband's eyes concerning the iniquities of this wicked 'boom' that the force of his indignant pen would crush many an alleged millionaire in a week."

"I shuddered at the thought. None knew it better than I. I did the best thing possible—made a clean breast of it. When I told her that Col. Storke had promised to make them rich and that I would guarantee it, that I had only consented to the proposition because I had the best wishes of the dear old fellow at heart, I noted the bright look of satisfaction in her face and felt relieved. She wept a few tears that business men should consider her husband so innocent, but upon my assurance that we all loved and respected him just the same, she consented to help the scheme, provided I promised nothing dishonorable would be done under his name."

"That very day the Eureka townsite sale came off while Sykes sat in his office perfectly oblivious that he was making a fortune in a day."

"Eureka townsite was a trampled wheat field. A six by nine shanty had been erected on the railroad for a depot and a plow has marked out two main avenues that intersected each other. Cement side-walks had been hastily laid, in the stubble, down either side these alleged thoroughfares; all the block corners were marked by posts with signs on them giving the names of the proposed streets; while a booth had been erected for the auctioneer at the intersection of the avenues, and a brass band escorted the throng of graft pigeons, boomers and suckers by special train to Eureka station."

"The auctioneer opened the sale with flowing speech, winding up by reading the analysis of Eureka spring water made by the great Prof. Christopher Sykes himself. He then regretted that it became his painful duty to announce that Prof. Sykes had given instructions to reserve every alternate lot on the alleged improved avenues for himself. Amidst the howl from the 'suckers' at this announcement the 'graft pigeons,' supplied with cords of money, jumped in followed by the 'boomers' and bought lots right and left and the suckers fearing lest they should lose all chance of speculation bid fabulous prices for positions."

"In the middle of the afternoon, just at the interest in the sale was waning, a courier on horseback was seen galloping across the field from the nearest telegraph station. All interest was centered in the rider until the auctioneer shouted 'hurra' the professor is alright. Here is a message from Col. Storke: 'Prof. Sykes, at my earnest solicitation consents in fairness to public to sell reserved lots. Hope this reaches in time.—Storke.' It is needless to say prices went up. There was a scramble for the reserved lots and the Eureka sale was heralded as the most successful of the 'boom.'"

"Next day a well-dressed gentleman who looked like money entered my office and said: 'You are Mr. Joseph Thompson, I believe, private secretary to Prof. Christopher Sykes? Col. Storke has given me a note to you.' I nearly fell off my chair. I wonder, what next? The note read: Dear Joe:—Bearer wants to buy controlling interest in Eureka Land & Water Co., but insists upon treating with principal. Sale of my life, must risk his seeing Sykes.—Storke. I felt that

the risk was too great and tried to save Storke from what I supposed his ruin."

"I regret to say, I said, Prof. Sykes is now at his literary work and has given instructions not to be disturbed."

"I am astonished," he replied, "that a man with so extensive interests at stake can be employed in literary work in such exciting times as these, although I have heard that he is preparing a philosophical work. Well, I simply must see him or I shall make another deal within an hour."

"I very reluctantly called Sykes in, not daring to overrule the Colonel's judgment, and he departed himself with that calm and simple dignity which always characterized him especially when abstracted."

"You are Prof. Sykes I believe," said the stranger politely and reverently.

"Sykes bowed and took the gentleman's proffered hand."

"You are interested in the Eureka Land & Water Co. I believe."

"Bless me! yes, I believe I have some shares, but you must see Col. Storke. Please give the gentleman Storke's address Mr. Thompson. Fine property Eureka. Discovered it by analyzing water from Eureka springs. Go and see Col. Storke he is a man of great integrity, bright eyes and wonderful brain power for business enterprises. Would trust him with anything I have on earth and can recommend him most highly. You must pardon me, sir, this is my time for literary work. Go and see Storke. Tell him I sent you. Good day, sir," and with great dignity the professor bowed himself out of the room probably forgetting the incident a moment after."

"Wonderful man that—Wonderful man," said the stranger rubbing his hands. What an advantage these men of learning have over us poor devils. It was a privilege to meet him."

"When he had gone I laughed until my sides ached. I could have hugged the old fellow for his unconscious loyalty to a friend."

"During the afternoon Storke came into the office with a rush:

"What in the world could Sykes have said to that man? but tell me about it later. He came back and planked up the coin. Then offered to continue me in the management on the strength, he said, of Prof. Sykes' extraordinary recommendation of me. Here is a check for \$100,000 which I want you to give Mrs. Sykes."

"When," I whistled.

"It's alright. I made enough to afford it and more to if necessary. I will attend you later," and off he went.

"We lost no time in packing Prof. and Mrs. Sykes off to the East on a visit and when they returned Storke had a fine home built for them in Eureka. Prof. Christopher Sykes is now known as the father of Eureka and he spends his time among musty books looking up 'cases in point to prove 'Hell a Myth.'"

Why they were out of Spirits.

The elder Matthews arrived one day at a forlorn county inn, and addressing a lugubrious waiter, inquired if he could have a chicken and asparagus.

The mysterious serving-man shook his head.

"Can I have a duck, then?"

"No, sir."

"Have you any mutton chops?"

"Not one, sir."

"Then, as you have no eatables bring me something to drink. Have you any spirits?"

"Sir," replied the man, with a profound sigh, "we are out of spirits."

"Then, in wonder's name, what have you got in the house?"

"An execution, sir," answered the waiter.